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***THE BARNABITES***



**Manual of history and spirituality  
of the Order of Clerics Regular  
of St. Paul Beheaded**

# Chapter 4

## THE FIRST PAULINE ORDER

Not only Anthony M. Zaccaria, with a deep sense of humility, but the Barnabites as an entire group recognized Saint Paul and Fra Battista da Crema as the true founders of the new Order of Clerics Regular, and, consequently, declared themselves their sons.

Therefore, we have to take a fast look at these two characters who are so outstanding in the first Barnabite history, and who, especially the Apostle, have influenced generations of Barnabites.

### 1. The first Pauline Order

It is a fact that the Barnabites and the Angelic Sisters are the first two Orders of the Church to derive from Saint Paul their name and their program of life.

This does not mean only an honor, but most of all a way of life. The Constitutions offer us a model to imitate, not to contemplate!

After us more than ten Pauline Institutes will rise in the Church:

- *The Barnabites*, CRSP.
- *Paulist Fathers*, CSP: the missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, New York; founded in 1858 by Isaac Hecker to spread Christian doctrine among the non catholic.
- *Society of St. Paul*, Malta: founded in 1910 for the missions.
- *The Society of St. Paul*, SSP, Alba (Italy): founded in 1913 by Don Alberione for the media apostolate.
- *Les Paulistes*. Mission of St. Paul of the Greek-Melchite rite, Baalbek (Lebanon); founded in 1933 by Msgr. Germanos Mouaccad to preach and give retreats to the people.
- *Mission ouvriere S. Pierre et Paul*. secular Institute of priests and laity founded in Marseille (France), 1941, by Jacque Loew.
- *The Angelic Sisters of St. Paul*, ASP.
- *The Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres*, SPC, Chartres: founded in 1700 for hospitals and schools apostolate.
- *Petites Soeurs de Saint Paul*, Ouvre de S. P. Friburg, 1873.
- *Daughters of St. Paul*, FSP, Alba (Italy): founded in 1915 by Don Alberione.
- *Compagnia di San Paolo*, Milan: secular Institute of priests and laity founded in 1920 by Cardinal Ferrari.
- *Fraternité S. Paul pour l'aide au development*, Belgium: a group of lay people tied to the Belgian Pax Christi.

## 2. What does it mean to be a Pauline Order?

We will present the data in five paragraphs, starting with the ‘Paulism’ of the Founder; then how the name of Clerics Regular of Saint Paul Decapitated came about; and finally, in the last three paragraphs we will describe the most outstanding testimonies of the “Paulism” of the Order in its Rules, worship, houses and churches dedicated to the honor of St. Paul.

### *a. Saint Anthony M. Zaccaria and Saint Paul*

In Europe, during the 1500’s, Christianity was vibrating under the impulses of the movement of renewal. This renewal included a return to Scripture, especially Saint Paul, the reformer *par excellence*, to achieve interior renewal, union with God (meditation and the sacraments), and the practice of Charity as a direct expression of spiritual asceticism.

Anthony Mary proposes the full realization of the Gospel as interpreted by Saint Paul: “He sees in the Apostle the one who better corresponds to his ideal of reform, proclaiming the need of a radical Renewal: implacable fight against lukewarmness, constant progress toward perfection, for the renewal of the Christian fervor.”

On the other hand, “God saw that Anthony M. Zaccaria’s heart had the elements of a character made to echo every whisper of Paul’s spirit. Both energetic and vibrant souls, they have the same love for God and man; both have the same inclination to action as an irresistible need to expand; both are inclined to austerity of life as a self-control which makes their steps secure; both are opened to the same sensitivity toward others; both receive the same endurance in pain and the same humility in their successes. This explains the might of their vast apostolate.”

Fra Marcello started him in the study of the Scriptures, but it was Fra Battista da Crema, “a scholar in theology and particularly in Scripture, especially Paul (whose reminiscences decorate his writings),” to inculcate in him a passionate love for the Apostle, peculiar of the Dominican tradition which, through Cassian, goes back to Saint John Chrysostom.

From Saint Paul he learned:

- a. the central idea of God’s providential and sanctifying plan, which has been put into effect in Christ and in the Church;
- b. the Christian asceticism symbolized in the old man, dead in Adam, and the new man resurrected in Christ;
- c. the social understanding of CHARITY;
- d. the contrast between the economy of the Old Testament Law and the Freedom of the New.

“For sure, he was worthy of the spirit and the fervor of the Apostle. He found nothing better to love and to inflame the spirit, than the Epistles of Saint Paul.” “He read and explained them using and trying to imitate the words, the gestures, and the exhortations of Paul, in public as in private, so as to bring about salvation.”

“His speeches were structured and constructed with the doctrine and sayings of the Apostle. His letters had a style similar to that of Saint Paul, emanating something of the Pauline spirit.”

“Read his writings. Saint Paul’s doctrine constituted the apodictic proof of the truths Anthony Mary displays in the Sermons, where there are 72 scriptural quotes from Saint Paul.

He defines Paul as: “Chaste, scholar, a true friend of God, the incomparable Paul, that wise doctor of the Gentiles.”

“In the Letters he calls the Barnabites and the Angelics “Children of Paul the Saint, Stocks of Paul,” while he signs himself, “Priest of Paul the Apostle.”

A very characteristic Pauline spirit is present in the Letters V, VI, IX, and X.

In the Constitutions, dictated to the “Children of Paul,” among the fifteen days of the year in which it is allowed to eat meat, he includes the feasts of the Conversion and Death of St. Paul, and, among other things, he outlines the figure of the “Reformer” with strokes which are utterly Pauline.

“Possessed in all his secrets, assimilated also in the form, to the point of becoming the form of his thought, constantly re-meditated by Anthony Mary, the thought of St. Paul becomes the term of comparison of every one of his thoughts, the model to confirm his actions, the power to boost his apostolate, the physiognomy he dreamed for the sons and daughters of his spiritual paternity.”

The most meaningful steps of his life are very much an expression of Paulism: the theological initiation to the Sermons addressed to the spiritual elite of Cremona; his will in 1531, in which he expressed his desire to dedicate to the Conversion of Saint Paul an altar in the church of St. Donato, in Cremona; the foundation of the Clerics Regular of Saint Paul (1533), and of the Angelic Sister of Saint Paul (1535); the marvelous speech of October 4, 1534, which is the spiritual guidelines for his children; his premature death (1539) blessed with a vision of Saint Paul; not to mention the spiritual direction and the spread of the devotion to Christ Crucified and to the Holy Eucharist, beautiful expressions of the Pauline spirit.

Therefore, he was properly defined: “faithful imitator of his Paul,” and the Paulism of Anthony M. Zaccaria was summed up in the form so familiar to every Barnabite: “*Anthony’s heart, Paul’s heart*” (Eugenio Pacelli, future Pius XII)

### ***b. History of the name***

At the very beginning the Barnabites were called: “The little children of Paul the Saint.”

A contemporary of the Founder, the Angelic Sfondrati, gives the clue for so meaningful a name: “Their desire to honor *God* and to bring souls to salvation was so right and passionate that these two motivations became the cause of the origin and persistence of this particular name. As they looked upon this Apostle, among the others, as a furnace of God’s love, elected by the same God as his chosen vessel, and also so enthused about love of neighbor, and so experienced in this virtue, that they thought they would never get tired of imitating him, nor they would ever lose sight of his teachings and example.”

As a consequence, even our first house was called “House of Paul the Saint.”

But when was the adjective “Decapitated” added to the name “Paul?”

The oldest document is of 1545: the first “*Liber Capitulorum*” (a diary of the Community) talks about “The house of Paul Decapitated.” Note that already in 1542 the Fathers had dedicated to Paul Decapitated their first chapel, located close to St. Ambrose. In this way they inaugurated that “peculiar custom and cult” toward the Apostle and Martyr which will be codified in the Constitutions of 1579.

Quoting almost word by word, Father Gabuzio writes: “At that time some liked to be called the ‘Clerics Regular of Saint Paul decapitated.’ This name remained for a long time



because the Fathers thought their function required not only the imitation of the teaching, but also of the sufferings of the Apostle.”

Anyway, the title “Decapitated” had to be used to distinguish the two families of Anthony M. Zaccaria.

In the first “*Liber Capitulorum*” the “House of Saint Paul Decapitated” is mentioned in opposition to the “House of Saint Paul the Converted” of the Angelic Sisters. Father Secchi justifies the birth of this name, “both because of the name given to the first chapel of the Fathers in Milan, and also to distinguish themselves, adding this name, from Saint Paul the Converted proper of the Angelics.” He was more explicit in another chapter: “So that these two houses, one of the Angelics and the other of the Clerics, would be distinguished using the same name, the Angelics were called of St. Paul the Converted because they had a deep devotion for the vocation of the Apostle; the Clerics instead were called of Saint Paul Decapitated, because their aim was to imitate the sufferings of the Apostle.”

The title was definitely codified by the 1579 Constitutions, and added to the name “Clerics Regular of Saint Paul,” following the Bull of Pope Paul III of July 24, 1535. Pope Gregory XIII in his Bull of approval of the Order addresses himself to the “beloved sons, Clerics Regular of Saint Paul Decapitated.”

But the first pontifical document to use this terminology is the Bull of Julius II of February 22, 1535, which gave the authorization, among other things, to receive new members and to profess the perpetual vows.

“But after deep evaluation,” Father Gabuzio writes, “the name ‘Decapitated,’ started to be abandoned by us, both because of brevity, and also because we profess to follow, as much as our frail human nature allows us, the holy Apostle, whom we venerate as Decapitated, in his life and the good battle fought for Christ here on earth, rather than in the fruition of the heavenly glory.”

We have to give credit to Father Gabuzio, because the title, although still officially kept, is not used in practice.

With the passing of time, the name BARNABITES, from the first mother-house in Milan, became most common.

“I wish it was God’s will,” Father Gabuzio cries out, “we were worthy of this name Barnabite, that is, men of consolation in the Church of God, and that, having become true imitators of Saints Paul and Barnabas, we would not be found unworthy of such great Apostles and patrons.”

Father Secchi likes to scrutinize the hidden motives of the new name given us. “I’m inclined to believe,” he writes in his contorted Latin, “that it happened by divine inspiration and not without a certain mysterious advantage, to incite the Congregation. Indeed, I would also think that it was the plan of the same Saint Barnabas, who, while alive, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was put aside by a divine voice, together with Paul, for the apostolate, and he was elected as Paul’s partner in his work and trips, both united by a divine bond. Now that he enjoys the life of the Blessed ones, to be able to partake on earth in the life of the new family dedicated to his companion Paul, he wished to give her his house (as a matter of fact, he had chosen for himself, being the first to come to Milan to spread the faith of Christ), and his name, so that the dynamic guests who had gathered together in it, would love Saint Paul, whom they had taken as their Patron on their own initiative, and they would venerate Barnabas whose name, not without the voice of God (because it was given by popular acclaim) was imposed on them. This would be for them a source of strength to dedicate themselves with zeal to follow the steps of both Apostles in the performance of their

apostolate.”

### *c. Paul in the Constitutions*

The Barnabites have had three Rules: the first was the Constitutions by Fra Battista da Crema (which was used as a guideline by the Holy Founder for his “Constitutions of the sons of Saint Paul the Apostle,” which were never promulgated); the second was the one entitled “Constitutions of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul Decapitated,” promulgated in 1552 at the time of the famous apostolic visitation, juridical in character and transitory, since they had in mind to prepare a third Rule, a definitive one, to comprise all the rules and regulations of the Order: this will be the Constitutions of 1579.

(We skip the “Rules for Novices” mandated in 1568 and promulgated in 1598. Its introduction is exquisitely Pauline in character).

The 1552 Constitutions open with Saint Paul’s admonition “To do everything properly and in order” (1 Cor 14:40); the most important statements of the text (on prayer, duties of the Superior, chastity) are corroborated with quotations from the Epistles, always accompanied by expressions which, with their Pauline origin, give them more power and solemnity. These Constitutions introduce the practice of adding the words “to the Blessed Paul the Apostle” in the form of the profession of the vows.

Let us now take a look at the definitive codex, where Saint Paul occupies a preeminent position.

The Prologue is a summary of the main traits of the Barnabite Paulism: “It is a worship and a special love reserved for Saint Paul, which is manifested in the study of his teaching and his preaching, which then has to be translated into the imitation of his unlimited love for souls, the price of every sacrifice.”

Passages from the Letters (36 quotations against 30 from other Biblical writings) are the most used to back up the affirmations contained in the text, which too are infiltrated with Pauline expressions: “Leader and Patron” (#86-98), “Imitating our Saint Paul” (#161), “Our Paul” (#99), “The Apostle said” (#181), “As we get from the Apostle” (#184), “According to the teaching of the Apostle” (#190), “As to the sons of the Doctor of the Gentiles” (#229).

In the Constitutions “Saint Paul is presented to us as the model for holiness and apostolic life, understood as total dedication to the Gospel ideal.”

“First of all, the reference to Saint Paul as the man consecrated to God, who sacrifices everything for his ideal, is quite frequent.”

In the Prologue, Paul appears to us as the object of study for his teachings, and the object of imitation for his sufferings for the sake of Christ.

Like Saint Paul, the Novices must practice self-denial, “boasting about nothing except the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (#38; Gal 6:14). Our brethren will embrace with ardor poverty, if they would follow the example of Jesus and of the Saints (first among them Saint Paul) “who have mixed their wonderful joy with their deep poverty, and the result has been an overflow of giving to others” (#102; 2 Cor 8:2). “Imitating our Saint Paul they will beat up their body and they will reduce it to slavery” so that it would not be an obstacle to the spirit but subjected to it (#161; 1 Cor 9:12).

The apostolate, which, with obedience, is the great password of our Constitutions, recalls the example of Saint Paul. The purpose of the Novices education is to teach them to become all for all, so as to save at least some of them at any cost (#37; 1 Cor 9:22). The purpose of self-denial and union with God is the salvation of souls (#1, 6, 207, 303). Study is

ordered toward the apostolate (#234); the Barnabites are presented as the ‘Bishop’s helpers’ (#215, 222); any activity, unless it is forbidden or it is not according to religious discipline (#230), is open for them (#227, 230); the Missions are recommended “as it is suitable to the sons of the Doctor of the Gentiles” (#229).

As we said, teachings and regulations of our Constitutions are heavily deduced from the Letters of Saint Paul. The quotes and references become more frequent and meaningful in the chapters on Obedience (#86, 98), on Chastity (#99), on Poverty (#102), on fraternal correction (#176, 180), on the correction proper of the Superiors (#181, 184, 186, 187), on harmony and equality (#190, 191, 194), on Father General (#348, 349, 350), on local Superiors (#429, 432).

If we deepen these references to Saint Paul we find the proof that the Constitutions codify a spirituality which derives all its force and originality from the teachings of the Apostle.

#### ***d. Worship of Saint Paul***

Many are the private and public ways used by the Barnabites to express their devotion and their worship for Saint Paul, their principal Patron.

A picture of Saint Paul dominates every one of their buildings, and, by preference, their houses and churches are dedicated to him, or at least one altar is consecrated to his name.

For the selection of their religious name the first Fathers were always inspired by Saint Paul.

The Rites for the Investiture and the Profession of the vows are Pauline in character. In the first form of profession we read: “To Christ Crucified, to his glorious Mother, and to Saint Paul the Apostle.” In giving the habit the celebrant pronounces Saint Paul’s words to the Ephesians: “You must lay aside your former way of life and the old self which deteriorates through illusions and desire, and acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking. You must put on that new man created in God’s image, whose justice and holiness are born of truth” (Eph 4:22-24). At the conclusion of the ceremony he invites the newly-elected to live in humility, in obedience, and in charity “through the intercession of Saint Paul the Apostle whom we invoke as the Protector of this Congregation.”

Our liturgy gives a privileged place to Saint Paul.

- The Feasts of the Conversion and the Decapitation of Saint Paul;
- Fr. Gavanti, famous Barnabite liturgist, prescribed the bow at the mention of St. Paul’s name;
- The Holy Founder’s Mass and Office are embroidered with Pauline terms;
- In the daily prayers the invocation of the Apostle is always present, especially at night prayers;
- By decree of the 1958 General Chapter, the whole Barnabite youth is required to study the life and the teachings of Saint Paul the Apostle (#381).
- Finally, by decree of the 2000 General Chapter, during the ceremony of the Solemn Profession, the book of the Letters of St. Paul is given to the newly professed.

#### ***e. Houses and churches dedicated to Saint Paul***

The Bull of Pope Paul III “*Dudum felicitis recordationis*” allowed our Founders to

dedicate to Saint Paul their first church (built on the spot where the old little church of Saint Barnabas was located). Dreamed and willed by St. Anthony Mary, our mother-church of Saints Paul and Barnabas, was started in 1545 by Father Morigia. Therefore, with much more reason the first Fathers could call their house “the House of Paul.”

The custom of dedicating our houses to St. Paul became an article of the 1579 Constitutions (#165). Through the centuries the presence of the Barnabites in the various field of apostolate (parish, school, mission, youth, etc.) has one name, one banner, the one of St. Paul.

### 1500

- Milan: St. Paul and St. Barnabas (commonly called Saint Barnabas);
- Casal Monferrato: St. Paul (1573), designed by Father Binago, where St. Louis Gonzaga will be a guest;
- Rome: St. Paul alla Colonna (1596), which was leveled in 1639 by Alexander VII for urban renewal;

**1600:** the century of the great Barnabite expansion, there are twelve churches dedicated to the Apostle:

- Acqui: St. Paul (1605);
- Bologna: Basilica of St. Paul Major (1606), designed by Fr. Mazenta;
- Genoa: Saint Paul in Campetto (1606);
- Novara: St. Paul and St. Mark (1607), where the Barnabites had been called in 1598 by bishop Bascapè;
- Vigevano: St. Paul and St. Charles (1609);
- L'Aquila: St. Paul and St. Barnabas (1609);
- Annecy (Savoy): St. Paul and St. Charles (1614), through St. Francis de Sales;
- Tortona: St. Paul (1618), while Fr. Dossena was the bishop;
- Macerata: St. Paul (1621), designed by Fr. Mazenta;
- Lescar (Beam): St. Paul and St. Christine (1622);
- Dax (Bearn): St. Paul and St. Charles (1631);
- Montmarsan (Gascony): St. Paul and St. Joseph (1656).

So, where the churches had already that titular saint, the Barnabites added the one of St. Paul, often together with the one of St. Charles Borromeo, Patron of the Congregation.

**1700's** is the century when the Congregation registers its highest number of houses and members:

- Margarethen am Moos (Vienna), 1745, foundation dedicated to St. Paul.

**1800's**, in the midst of persecutions, the Order finds new life:

- Paris: St. Paul's house (1857), founded by Fr. Schuvalov;
- Bergen (Norway): St. Paul's church (1865);
- Gefle (Sweden): St. Paul's church (1881).

**1900's** registers a great expansion of membership and foundations:

- Kain (Belgium): seminary of St. Paul;
- Arpino: seminary of St. Paul (1922);



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- Paris: St. Paul's house (1924), by the Our Lady of the Rosary parish,
  - Florence: St. Paul's seminary (1933)
  - Melun (France): St. Paul's seminary (1937);
  - Copacabana (Brazil): St. Paul's parish (1937);
  - Bukavu (D.R. Congo): St. Paul's college (1954);
  - Buenos Aires: St. Paul college (1949);
  - Buffalo, N.Y: St. Paul house (1961);
  - Monza: St. Paul's house (1964);
  - Montaldo (Turin): Novitiate of St. Paul (1966).

**2000's**

- Tagaytay City (Philippines): St. Paul Scholasticate

The human events have closed, suppressed, abandoned, or even destroyed some of these houses or churches.

According to the dictate of the Constitutions every one of our houses has an image of St. Paul at the entrance, and in every church we have an altar dedicated to him.

Also the Angelic Sisters have developed this type of worship toward the Apostle Paul consecrating to him their first church in Milan, and all their houses.